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DAN SMOOT

BUILDING ONE-WAY BRIDGES

President Johnson says:

"When I first became President — almost my first act — I informed Premier Khrushchev that we in the United States intended to reduce the level of our production of fissionable materials and we hoped that he and the Soviets would do likewise. Premier Khrushchev agreed."(1)

Since that "first act," the President has tenaciously hugged the belief that Kremlin dictators are honorable men with whom reciprocal relations can be maintained.

In 1966, the State Department issued a statement — entitled "United States Policy and International Communism" — to explain President Johnson's efforts "to build new bridges to Eastern Europe":

"We are no longer facing a unified communist bloc systematically and zealously pursuing an agreed-upon and supposedly unchanging blueprint for world conquest."(1)

After saying that, the State Department document continues, *in the same paragraph*, to say:

"Despite differences over . . . strategy, both Moscow and Peking endorse and support so-called 'wars of national liberation,' such as is currently being waged in Viet-Nam. At the January 1966 Tri-Continental Conference in Havana, Premier Fidel Castro extolled 'revolutionary violence' as the only solution to Latin America's problems, and Cuban efforts to export revolution and subversion doubtless will continue."(1)

In the next paragraph, the State Department publication attempts to show how the Peking-Moscow unanimity in supporting Ho Chi Minh, Castro, and other communist instigators of "wars of national liberation" and "revolutionary violence" is proof that these communist powers are no longer unified in pursuit of communism's goal of world conquest — to wit:

"In actively aiding insurgent groups who are rebelling against established governments in the lesser developed countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, communist powers are often clearly

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competing with each other for dominance in the world communist movement. They also entertain strong hopes that their contributions to such violence will gain them beachheads of influence in these areas without direct involvement or risk to themselves."(1)

Having thus asserted that communist powers are no longer unified in their drive for world conquest, because they are now competing for leadership of the drive, the State Department publication then proceeds to disprove the point it has been trying to make:

"The fact that the international communist movement has been evolving from a unified toward a polycentric configuration does not significantly reduce the inherent threat or danger to the West. As Secretary Rusk recognized on May 24, 1966, 'the leaders of both the principal communist nations are committed to promotion of the communist world revolution — even while they disagree bitterly on tactics."(1)

The State Department publication concludes with an explanation of the policy of courting some communists while fighting others:

"Our policy . . . attempts to encourage evolution in the communist world toward national independence and open societies . . . . We are attempting to achieve this objective 'by adjusting our policies to the differing behavior of different communist states — or to the changing behavior of the same state . . . .'

"At the same time that we are attempting to stop communist aggression in Viet-Nam, it is important to demonstrate that we are in fact willing to engage in peaceful trade and that the communists' true interests lie in that direction. This forms an important part of what Secretary Rusk has termed our 'balanced strategy for peace.' "(1)

At best, this "balanced strategy for peace" is an effort to react to the shifting currents of power politics and propaganda within communist countries. The initiative is entirely with the communists. When their line "softens," we rush eagerly to oblige them with concessions. When it hardens, we stand rebuffed, anxiously awaiting the next softening.

The State Department says the balanced strategy for peace is intended to encourage "national independence and open societies" in "the communist world"; but a former State Department official says otherwise. In the November 7, 1966, issue of *U.S. News & World Report*, Francis B. Stevens (for years head of the State Department's Eastern European Division) says that Johnson's policy toward Eastern European communist nations "is not . . . an attempt to detach these countries from the Soviet orbit. The policy was tacitly abandoned at the time of the Hungarian revolt."(2)

Our policy of attempting to detach captive nations from the Soviet orbit was abandoned at the time of the Hungarian revolt!

When the Hungarians revolted in 1956, the Eisenhower administration did nothing to aid or encourage them. In fact, the State Department exerted pressure to prevent Hungarian freedom fighters from getting Spanish aid through West Germany. After Soviet tanks had crushed the rebellion, and the freedom fighters' last pitiful cries for help were silenced, a new Soviet-puppet government was firmly installed in Hungary. Then, after it was all over, the Eisenhower administration made a gesture: it downgraded our diplomatic establishment in Budapest from an embassy to a legation.

Ten years later (November 29, 1966), Johnson upgraded our Budapest mission to an embassy, as a bridge-building gesture of respect and friendliness to the Hungarian government. Does Johnson think the Hungarian communist regime has changed since 1956?

On November 30, 1966, the communist premier of Hungary said:

"When the status of these diplomatic missions was raised, it was not due to a change in our policy, it was they [Americans] who were compelled to review their own policy."(3)

In his notable speech on October 7, 1966, President Johnson said:

"Hand in hand with these steps to increase East-West ties must go measures to remove territorial and border disputes as a source of friction in Europe. The Atlantic nations oppose the use

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of force to change existing frontiers; and that is the bedrock, too, of our American foreign policy. We respect the integrity of a nation's boundary lines."[4]

What is the portent of those statements? The Soviet Union is not really a nation. It is a colonial empire whose domain includes several non-Russian nations incorporated into the "Union" by force. Patriots in the captive nations have kept alive the hope of rescuing their countries. For the most part, our government, doing nothing to encourage the enslaved peoples, has treated the captive countries as if they were legitimate, willing parts of the Soviet Union. With regard to certain nations, however — Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia — our government has never recognized their forcible incorporation in the Soviet Union.

Yet, the "existing frontiers" and "boundary lines" of the Soviet Union, as determined by the Soviets, embrace the captive nations. Is President Johnson saying that it is "the bedrock . . . of our American foreign policy" to oppose captive nations who try to free themselves from Soviet tyranny? I think he is.

In his October 7, 1966, speech, President Johnson gave several specifics on what he had done and wished to do in his efforts to woo the Kremlin gangsters and convert them into friends of the United States.

Commenting on the October 7 speech, Max Frankel, in *The New York Times*, October 8, 1966, said:

"The Johnson Administration took a few more friendly steps toward the Communist nations of Europe yesterday in what has become a persistent effort to shake off the chill in relations brought on by the war in Vietnam . . . .

"Mr. Johnson began his gesturing toward Moscow in Idaho August 26 in a speech that explicitly urged the Soviet leaders to set the Vietnam conflict to one side and take up the search for the step-by-step accommodation begun in 1963 with the signing of the nuclear test ban treaty.

"In Washington, a few days after the Idaho address, the President turned to his Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, and principal adviser for Soviet affairs, Llewellyn E. Thompson, with a request that they search the diplomatic bin of unfinished business to see what concrete concessions might be offered to the Russians to give meaning to the Idaho message.

"The first thing they found was the virtually finished agreement to begin direct commercial airline service between New York and Moscow. Diplomats initialed the accord five years ago, but the United States had delayed its final ratification ever since, either to retaliate for Soviet policies that were deemed offensive, such as the building of the Berlin wall, or to extract concessions in other negotiations, such as those for fishing rights in the North Pacific.

"All these accumulated objections were suddenly waived on the President's instruction and the Russians were sounded out on whether Vietnam would stop them from concluding even the air agreement, which they had so long wanted even more than Washington."[5]

The "air agreement" with the Soviets (mentioned by President Johnson on October 7 as one of his desired peace objectives, and discussed by Frankel in the article quoted above) was a government-sponsored deal between Pan American World Airways and Soviet Aeroflot for direct Moscow-New York air service. The agreement was signed by our State Department on November 4, 1966. Just the day before, the State Department had been formally notified that Soviet Aeroflot was the means by which an American citizen had been kidnapped on October 31, 1966, and transported to Czechoslovakia for imprisonment.[3]

Concerning the Pan American-Aeroflot agreement, an article in the November 7, 1966, issue of *Aviation Week & Space Technology* magazine said:

"Like so many other U.S.-Soviet agreements, including the nuclear test ban treaty, this aviation pact will prove to be a poor bargain for the people of this country.

"The Soviets have long sought the New York air route for three reasons:

"It provides a secure line of communications directly to Moscow for their extensive espionage activity in the U.S. . . .

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"It provides another source of dollars milked from U.S. tourists to help finance espionage in this country.

"It also opens the gates for Soviet airline penetration of Latin America, allowing Aeroflot to pour a protected stream of Soviet subversion into major capitals of South America. The U.S. has fought hard to prevent this Soviet airline penetration of South America by keeping Aeroflot out of the West African airports it needs to cross the South Atlantic. With the Aeroflot flag flying at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York it will be difficult, if not impossible, to persuade any other nation to deny Aeroflot its facilities.

"The U.S. has denied the Soviets this New York route since 1961 for equally good political reasons. Now President Lyndon B. Johnson and Secretary of State Dean Rusk have decided to toss the Soviets this juicy morsel in the hopes that it will dull their appetites for more aggression in Vietnam. This seems like a forlorn hope indeed, coming at a time when the Soviets are peddling pictures of North Vietnamese pilots being trained in Russia on Soviet-built jet fighters and bombers. Every one of the hundreds of SA-2 surface-to-air missiles that are being fired at U.S. planes over Vietnam also bears a 'Made in USSR' label.

"Anyone who has had much experience in dealing with the Soviets on any matter will recognize the familiar pattern in the air route deal where the Soviets get something concrete that they badly need in exchange for a vague promise that is seldom, if ever, fulfilled."(6)

Commenting about the unbroken series of wrong decisions which our government had made in dealings with Soviet officials, James Forrestal (Secretary of the Navy and the first Secretary of Defense, under Truman) said:

"Consistency never has been a mark of stupidity. If the diplomats who have mishandled our relations with Russia were merely stupid, they would occasionally make a mistake in our favor."(7)

That was in 1945. It would be as difficult now as then to find "a mistake in our favor" that any President has ever made in dealing with the Soviets, since Roosevelt granted diplomatic recognition to the U.S.S.R. in 1933.

Johnson's consistency, in making deals that benefit the Soviet Union and damage the United States, threatens to be more disastrous than that of any previous President.

NEXT WEEK: More on Johnson's bridge building.

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FOOTNOTES

(1) "Western Tour: Arco, Idaho," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, September 9, 1966, p. 1993; "United States Policy And International Communism," State Department Document 3/40 (L) 1066BT, 1966, 3 pp.

(2) "A 'Deal' With Russia? The Prospects, As Seen In Washington," by Francis B. Stevens, *U.S. News & World Report*, November 7, 1966, pp. 48-9

(3) "Administration's East-West Trade Proposals Must Be Studied By Congress," speech by U.S. Rep. Glenard P. Lipscomb (Calif. Rep.), *Congressional Record*, January 17, 1967, pp. H256-62 (daily)

(4) "Transcript of President's Speech on Improving Relations With Eastern Europe," *The New York Times*, October 8, 1966, p. 12

(5) "Gestures to East Bloc," by Max Frankel, *The New York Times*, October 8, 1966, p. 13

(6) "Another Poor Bargain," by Robert Hotz, *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, November 7, 1966, p. 21

(7) *The Death of James Forrestal*, by Cornell Simpson (price: $5.95), Western Islands, Belmont, Massachusetts 02178, 1966, p. 53

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